underemployed poor through, firstly, encouraging the setting up of self-employment ventures by those who have studied up to 9th standard and, secondly, by providing wage employment by utilizing their labour for construction of socially and economically useful public assets.

New urban housing policy for green settlements

3306. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

the salient features of New Urban Housing Policy for Green Settlements;

the action plan of Government to fast promote this project in the backward regions of the country *i.e.* Orissa, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, etc.; and

to what extent this would address the problems of drinking water, control migration from rural areas to cities, promote employment generation projects and maintain ecological balance, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) The National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy (NUHHP), 2007 has been laid on the Table of both Houses of Parliament on 7.12.2007. The Policy emphasises on environment friendly habitat and has following salient features:—

(i) Development of green belts will be developed around cities with a view to maintaining the ecological balance.

(ii) Earmarking development of suitable green recreational areas like zoo, lakes and gardens for public visits in the Master Plan of each city/town.

(iii) Protection of water bodies with special emphasis on keeping the flood plains of tropical rivers free from construction or encroachments.

(iv) Ensure protection, through Master Plans of large depressions from being filled up since they are natural drainage points for conservation of water and can be . developed as suitable water bodies.

(v) Encourages cities/towns to keep a significant proportion of the total Master Plan area as 'green lungs of the city'.

(vi) Encourages States/UTs to develop Sub-regional/Special Area Development Plans for areas with fragile ecological characteristics on the basis of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) so as to take care of all environmental concerns at the planning stage itself.

(vii) Provides encouragement to City planners to lay down norms for development of urban sprawls and satellite townships.

(viii) Encouragement for preparation of State/UT level Regional Plans based on fast transport corridors for balanced growth.

(ix) Development of Mode! to promote the use of renewable energy sources particularly solar water heating systems in residential and commercial buildings.

(b)'Land' and its 'title' being State subjects, it is for State Governments to take steps for implementation of initiatives envisaged in the NUHHP, 2007. The Policy has been widely publicized and has been forwarded to all States/Union Territories as well as to various Ministries of the Central Government and other implementing agencies.

(c)The NUHHP, 2007 focused on development of green field towns and integrated urban housing extension of existing towns with complementary infrastructure to accommodate growing urban population. It also seeks to encourage State/UT Governments and Local authorities to formulate and implement poverty alleviation and employment generation programmes.

Shortage of houses

3307. SHRISANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that there is a shortage of more than 25 million housing units in urban cities and over 95 per cent housing shortage is related to the economically weaker sections of the country;

if so, the details thereof;

whether Government is considering to bring any comprehensive scheme with the consultation of Planning Commission for housing to the urban poor in the country;

if so, the details of such housing scheme; and

the target fixed under the scheme and by when it would be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) and (b) According to the estimation of a Technical Group constituted by this Ministry for assessment of the urban housing shortage at the end of the Tenth Five Year Plan, the total housing shortage in the country is 24.71 million dwelling units. Out of this, the shortage in respect of Economically Weaker Section (EWS) accounts for 21.78 million dwelling units.

(c) to (e) A provision of Rs. 95 crores has been made for an Interest Subsidy Scheme for housing the urban poor in the current financial year 2008-09. The scheme envisages to provide interest rate subsidy for loans taken by beneficiaries from the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Low Income Group (LIG) from public lending institutions and it is expected to cover 4 lakh beneficiaries during the remaining period of the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012).

Migrant workers in Mississippi

3308. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that the Indian migrant workers in Mississippi of USA are facing adverse working conditions and also undergoing hostile living conditions;

if so, whether any steps have been taken to bring relief to the workers there;

the number of male and female workers who are facing the wrath of the authorities and public there; and

if not, the reasons; *for* leaving the Lidian workers without any protection and prone to abuse?